

into planning and priority setting for NTP and NIEHS as he met with more than 60 representatives of government (federal, state, and county), industry, labor, academia, environmental organizations, local citizens groups, and Congressional aides. They met in March at the National Institutes of Health campus in Bethesda, Maryland. Olden spoke of his fundamental goal to make his organizations responsive to the needs of the American people. "In my view, programs supported by public funds should be accountable to the public," Olden said. In inviting attendees, Olden said, "It has become very clear that both the number of toxicological tests carried out by the NTP and the base of research related to the testing must be expanded. Therefore, I invite you to participate in an effort to explore the formation of national partnerships to meet future needs."

Discussion focused on three topics: how research and testing priorities are determined, what kinds of partnerships can be developed, and how to communicate research and testing results to the public. A number of participants emphasized their reliance on NTP study results. Rebecca Head, of Michigan's Washtenaw County Environmental Services Office, noted that officials in her state, "hang our hats" on NTP data as she called for studies of a broader range of health effects. Carol Henry, of the California Environmental Protection Agency, stated that there are many chemicals for which there is little or no scientific data. She suggested giving priority to high-volume chemicals that are transported in quantities and are therefore more likely to be spilled.

Roger McClellan, president of the Chemical Industry Institute of Toxicology, said, "The issue is how toxicology testing relates to toxicologic evaluation and ultimately to human risk assessment. We need to build partnerships to better this process." McClellan also noted the importance of testing problem chemicals, not just new or unknown ones.

Themes repeated throughout the meeting were that communication is the key to partnerships, to allow the input of ideas and to improve access to NTP data, and that information needs to be easier to obtain and more user friendly and accessible. Patricia Bauman, of the Bauman Foundation, suggested that an advisory committee on communication might provide NIEHS and NTP with feedback on the public's need for information.

The question of how to fund toxicology testing generated discussion and ideas. Kay Kiker, citizen activist from York, Alabama, raised the issue of using some portion of the fines levied on industry for this important research. Eula Bingham, of the University of Cincinnati, suggested a tax on heavily used chemicals, and Gilbert Omenn, of the University of Washington, proposed retroactive fines that might be levied on companies under the Toxic Substances Control Act to fund government studies. Discussion of the issue of who should pay for studies ended far from any agreement or plan. Concern was raised about potential conflict of interest in government-industry cost sharing, along with the need for NTP to remain in the position of what several termed the "honest broker." However, it was pointed out that

partnerships do not have to be based on money.

Plans are underway to follow up the March 11 meeting by convening smaller groups to offer specific advice on how to implement some of the suggestions offered by workshop participants. Olden stated that working together is the real way to succeed, and he plans to continue to explore ways to form partnerships with the many concerned segments of society.

## NTP Requests Recommendations for Chemical Testing

The National Toxicology Program is soliciting recommendations for chemicals, chemical classes, and biological issues to be tested for toxicity studies. NTP coordinates U.S. Department of Health and Human Services activities in characterizing the toxicity of chemicals and is made up of toxicology research groups within NIEHS, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, and FDA. NTP supports research and testing to increase the spectra of toxicologic information on selected chemicals and to develop testing assays and protocols.

Chemicals are selected for testing on the basis of data and information needs of NTP member agencies, other government agencies, and in response to public concerns regarding safety and health effects of specific chemicals or chemical classes. The NTP investigates a number of biological effects including *in vivo* metabolism and disposition, reproductive and developmental toxicity, genetic toxicity, immunotoxicity, neurotoxicity, general toxicity, and carcinogenicity. The results of the NTP studies are used by federal and state research and regulatory agencies as well as private sector organizations and are made available to the public in the form of technical reports and in the scientific literature.

There is no time limit for nominating chemicals and biological issues for examination. NTP will consider each nomination as it is received; however, available resources limit the number of chemicals tested. Send all nominations and relevant background information on the chemical or issue to B.A. Schwetz, Environmental Toxicology Program, NIEHS, PO Box 12233, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.

## Negro-Vilar to Join Wyeth-Ayerst

Andres Negro-Vilar, who for six years has been chief of the NIEHS Laboratory of Molecular and Integrative Neurosciences, has accepted a new position as vice-president, Wyeth-Ayerst Research, and Head of



**Input sought.** Representatives from government, industry, academia, and local citizen groups met in March to discuss priorities for NIEHS and NTP.